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ABSTRACT

This guidebook offers suggestions for teaching survival skills to students. It provides strategies for implementing key elements of an approach to learning survival skills that engages students as active, self-directed learners in the community. The guidebook is designed to help educators link students to resources in the community so that they will learn and use survival skills, which in turn will help them achieve their goals and lead independent lives. Part 1 discusses different survival skills, the reasons for teaching them, the ways in which the learning of survival skills is structured, and who is involved. Part 2 describes how to structure instruction using the community as a resource for learning. The third part details useful tools for enhancing the following seven skill areas: mobility, shelter, health, financial dependence, self-awareness, communication, and community participation. Each skill area includes a list of suggested community certifiers. Samples of survival-skill activity plans and student fact sheets are included. (LMI)

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CONNECTIONS

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Preface

What do students want to learn in high school? We asked them. Students from across the country told us that in addition to the basic academics, they want to acquire skills in these areas: mobility, shelter, health, financial independence, communication, self awareness, and community participation. Students feel they need a wide variety of skills to be satisfied and successful adults.

Survival Skills: A Guide to Making It on Your Own describes a community-based learning approach that links students with local experts to learn, practice, and demonstrate the skills essential for adulthood. Based on the premise that schools and communities must work together to guide students on the path to independence and success, our approach promotes the inclusion of community members in the process of both instruction and assessment.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) chose to develop this guide because it is committed to fostering productive partnerships between schools and communities, expanding opportunities for youth to make informed career and life decisions, preparing youth for the demands of a changing workforce, and using the community as a learning resource.

NWREL has a 30-year track record of providing research and development services addressing the needs of children, youth, and adults. While governed by a board of directors drawn from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, the Laboratory's leadership activities extend nationwide.

NWREL's Education and Work Program serves local and state organizations committed to building systems that serve all persons on their life and career journeys. The program has been a leader in school-to-work and educational reform for more than 25 years. Its staff of professional educators has worked with organizations throughout the Northwest and the nation to develop innovative educational programs in such areas as work-learning integration, assessment, career guidance, and school-business partnerships.

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- *Turning the Corner from Risk to Resiliency*, Bonnie Benard, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1991
- *Crossing Boundaries: Explorations in Integrative Curriculum*, Jane Braunger and Sylvia Hart-Landsberg, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1994.
- *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, Stephen R. Covey, Simon and Schuster, 1989.
- *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Daniel Goleman, Bantam Books, 1995.
- *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, Mary Pipher, Putnam Publishing Group, 1994.

survival
skills

introduction to survival skills

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Welcome to the growing number of teachers and community members committed to teaching all youth survival skills—the skills needed to lead a productive and satisfying life.

With its many ideas and resources, this guide will help you link students to resources in the community to learn and use the survival skills that will help them achieve their goals and lead independent lives.

What is in this guide?

This guide is divided into four sections:

- **Introduction to Survival Skills** describes what we mean by survival skills, why they are important, and who is involved in teaching them.
- **Teaching Survival Skills** describes how to structure instruction using the community as a resource for learning.
- **Useful Tools** includes fact sheets, orientation exercises, and a Survival Skill Activity Plan to help you structure survival skills learning. Throughout the guide, an arrow (—►) pointing to the margin indicates the page where you can find tools and supplementary information relevant to what you are reading. Camera-ready copies of the tools are packaged separately and can be photocopied for your use.
- **Sample Survival Skill Activity Plans** includes three completed plans illustrating the steps students need to take to learn and demonstrate survival skills. A master copy of the Survival Skill Activity Plan is included in the *Useful Tools* section.

"what I should be learning right now in school is the basic knowledge you need to get through life."

—Student

What are survival skills?

Survival skills are those capabilities that allow individuals to lead productive and satisfying lives, form positive and lasting

"My biggest worry is whether I will like my job and if I'll make enough to do what I want in my life. What if I spend all my time and money on studying something I'll end up hating to do?"

—Student

relationships, and plan for the future. For example, knowing how to prepare for a job interview, read a map, interpret a lease agreement, prepare nourishing meals, and cope with the death of a family member, are some of the survival skills people need to make it on their own.

How did we identify survival skills?

We surveyed hundreds of students in communities across the country, asking them to identify the survival skills they feel are most important for "making it on their own." We asked them to tell us about their biggest worries, the most important decisions they are facing right now, and how schools could help prepare them for independent living. The students' suggestions, combined with adults' experience and research on transitions between education and work, resulted in an extensive list of survival skills. Cross-referencing these with research on adolescents and popular books on how to succeed in life, relationships, and business, we organized the list into seven skill sets:

pages 45–51
survival skill sets

- **Mobility** because you need to know how to get where you are going.
- **Shelter** because you need to have a roof over your head.
- **Health** because you need to maintain your body and brain.
- **Financial independence** because you have to have money and know how to manage it.
- **Self-awareness** because to be happy you have to know what you want, what you need, and how to get it.
- **Communication** because we all have to talk and listen to each other.
- **Community participation** because we all need to support and help each other.

While this list of survival skills is extensive, it is not exhaustive and is not the final word. It is impossible to identify one set of survival skills that meets the needs of everyone because each person's interests, goals, environment, and community vary. It is intended that staff, students, and community people will use this list as a first step in developing their own ideas for survival skills.

Why teach survival skills?

In school, students are encouraged to expand their academic abilities and often have the chance to explore careers. Less frequently, however, are they given structured opportunities to learn essential skills for independent living. It is our belief that in order for all youth to achieve their full potential, they need a solid educational foundation that consists of academic, career development, *and* life survival skills.

"I can feel myself losing interest in school because I don't understand how what I am learning here relates to life"

—Student

All students, whether they enter the job market immediately after graduation or continue on to higher education, need to master certain skills to conduct their daily lives and achieve their goals. Specifically, learning survival skills helps students:

- Acquire the skills necessary to become independent, productive, and satisfied adults
- Explore and refine their personal interests and goals
- Learn to access, navigate, and contribute to the community
- Learn about careers and lifestyle opportunities
- Recognize the elements of a well-balanced life
- Develop lifelong learning habits
- Learn to handle life's challenges—great and small

How is learning survival skills structured?

There is no one right way to structure the teaching of survival skills; what you do will depend on the organization, priorities, and resources of your school. There are, however, some essential elements to keep in mind:

- **Students need opportunities to learn and practice survival skills outside of the classroom**—Strong academic abilities are part of leading a successful, independent life, but students also need to acquire life skills that can only be learned first-hand in the community. For example, meeting with a bank manager about opening a tax-sheltered savings account,

(Financial Independence), discussing with an apartment manager renter's rights and how to complete a lease agreement (Shelter) or visiting a car dealership to compare the value of leasing versus buying an automobile (Mobility), are all community-based experiences through which students learn survival skills by doing them in real-life settings.

Expecting students to make a smooth transition from adolescence to independent adulthood without learning survival skills in the community is as unrealistic as expecting a pilot to fly solo without ever having spent time in a plane. To become licensed, pilots must take classes and study textbooks, but they must also log hundreds of hours in flight. Similarly, before they leap into life after high school, students should have opportunities—under safe and supervised conditions—to practice the skills they will need to make it on their own.

"The most important things I've learned in school I didn't learn in the classroom, but rather in the halls. Learning how to get along with different people and handling social situations is the most important skill to have."

—Student

- **Students take responsibility for their own learning**—Students learn survival skills by planning and carrying out activities in the community. School staff, parents/guardians, and community members help guide students' efforts, but students are expected to take primary responsibility for what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate skill mastery.

- **School staff act as facilitators**—To ensure that students effectively use resources in the community to acquire real skills, it is essential that their efforts be well-structured. Two tools school staff, parents/guardians, and community members can use to assist students are the Survival Skill Sets and the Survival Skill Activity Plan. The Skill Sets outline seven categories—Mobility, Shelter, Health, Financial Independence, Self-Awareness, Communication, and Community Participation—students can use to begin thinking about the kinds of survival skills that are important to them. The Survival Skill Activity Plan outlines nine steps students should follow to acquire and demonstrate a skill. The Skill Sets and Activity Plan help structure survival skill learning by keeping students' activities in the community focused, purposeful, and accurately documented.

pages 45–51
survival skill sets

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survival skill
activity plan

- **Students are assessed by "experts" in the community**—Survival skill learning is assessed by community volunteers

(called "community certifiers") who have expertise in a particular survival skill area. Initially, a community certifier helps a student plan how to acquire a particular skill. Once the student has learned and practiced the skill, he or she demonstrates it for the community certifier. The community certifier then decides whether the student has mastered the skill. If so, the community certifier signs the student's Activity Plan. If not, the student discusses with the certifier how to improve his or her performance of the skill and schedules another time for certification. If they have the time and interest, community certifiers can also provide survival skill instruction.

"You need to know people. For better or worse, connections are what count. You have to know how to network in order to make the best life for yourself."

—Student

These guidelines are not unique; they create a framework for learning that is similar to the tradition of earning merit badges and certificates in boys' and girls' scouting. The basic idea is that there are skills a young person needs that cannot always be learned in a classroom setting. Survival skills extend the classroom into the community and use the expertise of community members to help ensure that students are as well-prepared as possible to meet life's challenges.

Who is involved?

Teaching survival skills requires the time, commitment, and collaboration of students, school staff, parents/guardians, and community certifiers. For the process to go smoothly all partners must understand their roles and responsibilities:

► page 61
roles and responsibilities of partners fact sheet

- **Students** actively participate in planning and carrying out their own learning, interacting with community certifiers, and completing Activity Plans.
- **School staff** help students coordinate activities and locate resources. They also facilitate instruction, maintain resource files, and recruit and orient community certifiers.
- **Community certifiers** (volunteer experts in the community) help students plan how they will acquire skills and verify students' skill mastery by observing them demonstrate what they have learned. Certifiers can also provide survival skills instruction.

► page 70
community certifier fact sheet

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survival skills
parent/guardian fact sheet

- **Parents/guardians** support and encourage students, volunteer as community certifiers, and advocate for survival skills learning in the community.

Each school and community will differ in how they assign partner responsibilities. In one school, the counselor may recruit community certifiers and a teacher facilitate instruction; in another school, a volunteer from a community organization might recruit certifiers while teachers and counselors guide instruction.

What challenges can be expected?

When structuring opportunities for students to learn survival skills in the community, certain challenges arise. Two basic issues that you should address with the assistance of appropriate legal counsel in your district are transportation and health and safety. Following are some general guidelines for addressing these issues. (Note: these suggestions do not substitute for legal advice or local policy.)

- **Transportation**—No matter when you schedule survival skills learning—as an after-school assignment or as part of the regular school day—how students get to and from locations in the community creates questions of liability. Liability for injuries or accidents during transit typically rests with the party responsible for providing the transportation. For example, students are responsible if they drive a personally owned car, and the district is responsible if students are on a school-operated bus. Liability issues for students riding on public transportation vary according to whether the activity in the community is considered part of a school program, even if it takes place after regular school hours. Regulations vary in different states and districts. All liability issues should be clearly defined and understood by school staff, parents/guardians, and community certifiers before students venture into the community.

- **Health and safety**—Because students must be insured for accidents and injuries at school and during all school-related activities, insurance and liability issues arise any time students

leave school premises to continue learning. If students visit a a community site to learn or practice survival skills, they should be covered by the business's insurance rider for visitors and guests, and by the school district's liability policies. However, as more and more students take advantage of learning opportunities in the community, many businesses and school administrators now insist students be covered by special insurance policies and riders. To avoid misunderstanding in the event of accident or injury, school staff and community certifiers should confirm specific liability and coverage for students.

To help avoid incidents of harassment and to ensure that students feel comfortable meeting with community certifiers, you will need to establish guidelines both for students and community members regarding appropriate behavior, and locations for meetings and certification. Consult with legal experts and other appropriate professionals to discuss any issues that may affect the safety and well-being of students. Depending on your district and whether teaching survival skills is considered part of the school's curriculum, it may be necessary to conduct background checks on community certifiers.

A note about this guide

This guide offers suggestions for implementing key elements of an approach to teaching survival skills that engages students as active, self-directed learners in the community. It does not prescribe a model for, or address every logistical issue related to, implementing survival skills. Instead it provides a framework you can tailor to reflect the needs and interests of your students, community, and school. Although the examples in the guide are geared to high school students, the general approach to teaching survival skills that is discussed can be adapted for students in grades K-12.

Finally, this guide does not address how to build support for community-based learning at your school. It assumes that an environment of collaboration and commitment to teaching survival skills already exists. Other products in the *Connections* series (see inside back cover) and related staff development workshops are available to help you recruit the support of school staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members.

Addressing design issues

Some basic design issues should be considered before implementing a community-based approach to survival skills instruction. For example, how will all students participate? Who determines what survival skills students need? When will students complete survival skill activities? Answers to these kinds of questions depend on the goals of the program, the flexibility of the school's structure, and the level of commitment of school and community partners. To ensure a solid system for survival skills instruction, keep the following in mind:

- **Determine the age of participating students**—Students of any age can benefit from identifying and learning survival skills; however, an important issue to keep in mind is whether students are mature enough to assume the responsibilities of self-directed learning in the community. This community-based model of teaching survival skills requires that students plan their activities, schedule appointments, arrange transportation, meet with community certifiers, and demonstrate what they have learned. Younger students may require assistance from teachers and parents/guardians to carry out all the necessary steps.

  A second issue to consider is the age-appropriateness of specific survival skills; some skills are best learned when students are at a certain stage of their lives. For example, a sixth grader, who is several years from applying for a driver's license, would benefit more from knowing bike riding safety precautions than strategies for buying a used car (Mobility).

- **Determine an approach to reach all students**—All students, regardless of age, race, gender, ability level, and postsecondary plans, need to acquire survival skills. There are a variety of ways to structure instruction to reach all students. For example, your school might choose to integrate survival skills learning into one or more classes—such as language arts, science, math, social studies, personal finance, career development, or health. It could require that specific skills be learned at each grade level or that a set of skills be acquired by the time students exit certain grades. Another approach is to make survival skills instruction part of a senior-year pro-

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shadow

"This school helps you get ready for life because before you graduate you have to type 40 wpm, get a driver's license, open and maintain a checking account, register to vote, and learn parenting skills."

—Student

ject, or to offer a survival skills course either during the year or after school. Depending on the needs and interests of your students, school, and community, one or a combination of these approaches can help ensure that all students participate.

- **Determine how and when students access the community**—Two essential elements of survival skills instruction are providing students the chance to: (1) access resources in the community to learn survival skills, and (2) meet with community certifiers to demonstrate skill mastery. There is no one right way to schedule students' activities in the community. For example, one school might encourage students to access the community after school, while another might operate as an "open campus," allowing students to leave school during any free period. By using block- or split-scheduling, a school might designate a morning or afternoon when students can leave school to learn in the community and meet with community certifiers. A school could designate the same afternoon every week for community-based learning, allowing staff, students, and community members to plan, establish a predictable routine, and maintain consistency. With collaboration and creative planning, schools and communities across the country have overcome the challenge of scheduling to provide youth with rewarding community learning experiences.

Identifying survival skills

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survive

No one set of survival skills applies universally to everyone; people's location, interests, needs, and goals determine the skills that are important to them. A first step in initiating survival skills instruction is to generate a list of skills that are important for young people to learn. Some things to consider include:

- **Give students an opportunity to decide what they need**—Students should have a say in the decision about what survival skills they need to acquire. Because the purpose of survival skills is to prepare students for the future, they should have a chance to share their ideas about their goals and interests. Engage students actively in the process by having them interview each other, brainstorm in their classes, and review lists of skills generated by community members and school staff.

"I think as students we should be allowed to make some of our own decisions about what to learn, what we're interested in, and what we think we want and need to know."

—Student

- **Involve the community**—By involving community members—such as employers, parent/guardians, and local government leaders—in defining survival skills, you increase community interest in providing young people opportunities to learn. Address the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, economic development planning council, city council, and parent/teacher organization. Send out surveys or conduct focus groups. Using the tools in this guide, such as the Skill Sets, get people talking about what students need to learn to be satisfied, productive adults who are able to contribute positively to the community. Keep in mind that each member of the community you meet and consult is a potential community certifier.

pages 45–51
survival skill sets

- **Involve school staff and administrators**—Engaging all school staff—members of the site council and school board, administrators, teachers, assistants, counselors, lunchroom workers, maintenance workers—in implementing survival skills will foster school and districtwide support. When school staff are included in the conversation to decide which skills students acquire, they will have a greater sense of ownership in the process and possibly be more willing to tackle the challenges associated with scheduling, coordination, and planning.

"School needs to be a place where you study topics on the world today and how to live in it. We live in such a crazy world that sometimes it is hard to know where you fit in."

—Student

- **Identify categories of survival skills**—It can be difficult for people to generate a list of survival skills without a framework to help them organize their ideas. By providing students, community members, and school staff with categories of survival skills, such as the skill sets included in this guide, it will be easier for them to identify and prioritize the skills they consider important.

- **Maintain a broad perspective**—In identifying survival skills for youth, maintain a global as well as local perspective. In addition to identifying skills students need in their home communities, encourage them to acquire skills necessary for participating in a global economy. For example, students might obtain a passport (Mobility), study a world language (Communication), explore careers not available in the immediate community (Financial Independence), or learn to respect diverse cultures (Community Participation).

Choosing survival skills

Once a list of survival skills has been created, choose which ones students will learn. Students can play either a major or minor role in this process. The extent of their participation will depend on the structure and goals for survival skills instruction set by the school. Some approaches to choosing skills are to:

- **Require one or more specific skills that all students must learn** — Using the Skill Sets included with this guide or ones you have generated with school and community support, choose a set of skills that all students must acquire. Identify the steps required to learn, practice, and demonstrate each skill, and then record that information on an Activity Plan. This is considered a *standard* Activity Plan (see page 19), one that is developed by school staff or community certifiers for use by all students. This approach allows school staff to carefully oversee and coordinate survival skills instruction; however, student involvement in planning is limited. School staff can more firmly guide the process if they also recruit a pool of community certifiers.

pages 45–51
survival skill sets

page 52
survival skill
activity plan

- **Students choose one or more required survival skills as well as one(s) that interests them personally**—To establish greater student involvement, allow each student to choose some of the survival skills they wish to acquire. Students can develop *individual* Activity Plans (see page 19) for the skills they select. For individual Activity Plans students take the lead in planning how they will learn a skill, and may sometimes recruit community certifiers. As students develop these personalized plans, school staff and community certifiers provide support and guidance. This approach not only encourages students to express their individuality, but also helps involve a more diverse group of community members.

- **Students choose a specified number of survival skills from each Skill Set**—Instead of identifying specific survival skills that all students must learn, some schools require that students choose a particular number of skills from multiple Skill Sets. Using either the Skills Sets in this guide or ones you generate, students choose which skills they will acquire, and then work with school staff and community certifiers to develop individual Activity Plans discussed above. With this approach learning is almost entirely student-driven.

"Working more in groups would better prepare us for life because in real life, you are not all alone."

—Student

- **Students work in teams**—To acquire required survival skills or ones they have chosen, students can work in small teams. Each team agrees to complete the same survival skills and submits a group Activity Plan for each skill. A benefit of grouping students is that it helps them develop teamwork skills. In addition, by dealing with groups, school staff are able to help more students, more efficiently. This approach also decreases the number of community certifiers needed.

Your decision on how to choose survival skills should be based largely on creating the most rewarding experience possible for students. Whichever approach you employ, encourage students to be responsible for their own learning and to have fun.

Developing Survival Skill Activity Plans

Survival Skill Activity Plans help students structure what, where, when, and how they will learn survival skills. With a framework for organizing their ideas, students are able to achieve what at first might seem unattainable. For example, students may want to know how to start and operate their own business (Financial Independence), travel across the country (Mobility), or reupholster a family heirloom (Shelter). Achieving these skills can seem daunting unless students have a written plan that organizes and documents a process for doing so.

There are two types of Activity Plans:

- **Standard plans** are designed by school staff or community certifiers and specify the steps necessary to acquire a skill. Standard plans are useful when all students must acquire specific skills. For example, if certain survival skills are designated as a graduation requirement, school staff can write a plan for each skill that every student is expected to master. Sometimes community certifiers will want to develop standard Activity Plans to ensure students learn, practice, and demonstrate skills in a particular way. For example, an insurance agent might develop a standard plan that articulates the exact legal steps to follow if one is involved in a traffic accident (Mobility).

- **Individual plans** are designed by students in collaboration with school staff and community certifiers. For individual plans, students select a skill they are interested in and then take the initiative in planning how they will learn it. An important benefit of individual plans is that when students take on this kind of responsibility they often become more engaged in learning and develop a greater sense of self-confidence.

  Guidance is a key factor in the development of individual plans. Students should work with school staff and community certifiers to establish realistic goals, timelines, and activities. School staff should give special attention to students who are unfamiliar with self-directed learning and who might feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of learning in the community. It might be best for these students to begin with a

"School should be about doing projects that require you to do real life things like pay bills, find a job, use math, and get along in relationships."

—Student

standard Activity Plan to become accustomed to the survival skills process before they develop individual plans.

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survival skill
activity plan

The format for standard and individual Activity Plans is identical; both have the following nine steps:

- **Step 1—Basic information** includes student's name; lead school staff person's name and phone number; community certifier's name, phone number, address, area of expertise, and directions for getting to his or her business; and what form of transportation the student will use.
- **Step 2—Skill set** indicates which of the seven Survival Skill Sets—Mobility, Shelter, Health, Financial Independence, Self-Awareness, Communication, or Community Participation—the skill is associated with. Space is provide to write in other categories of survival skills that may have been identified by the school, students, or community.
- **Step 3—Skill to acquire** provides space to write a succinct statement summarizing what skill will be learned; for example, "obtain a library card and check out a book" or "follow emergency procedures if I'm in a car accident."
- **Step 4—What I will do to acquire this skill** requires a simple but detailed plan of the activities the student will do to learn the survival skill.
- **Step 5—Resources I will use to acquire this skill** specifies the sources of information the student will use to learn and practice the skill. Students should access as many different resources as possible, including community members, service agencies, businesses and organizations, libraries, magazines, newspapers, and the phone book.
- **Step 6—When I will be certified** includes a schedule of when the students will review the Activity Plan with school staff and the community certifier, learn the skill, and demonstrate the skill for certification.
- **Step 7—How I will prove what I've learned** indicates how the student will demonstrate skill mastery. Examples of demonstrating skill mastery include: performing the skill in

the presence of a community certifier, producing a product, providing a certificate proving completion of a skill, presenting a picture or video of an accomplishment, providing a written statement from an eyewitness, teaching others the skill, or accurately answering knowledge and inquiry questions.

- **Step 8—Checklist of certification criteria** describes specific criteria the community certifier will use to evaluate student performance and determine mastery of the skill. In collaboration with the student, the certifier might write a list of steps or specific activities or questions that he or she will ask to test knowledge, or define expectations for a level of performance or specifications for a project.

- **Step 9—Getting certified** provides space for the community certifier to state whether the student has successfully demonstrated the skill and to write comments about the student's performance. If a student does not successfully demonstrate the skill to meet the certifier's standards or as described in the Activity Plan, the certifier discusses with the student steps necessary to improve performance and records these steps on the form. A follow-up date for final certification is scheduled.

Activity Plans can be simple and include one Skill Set and one survival skill, or be complex with multiple Skill Sets or survival skills. The more extensive an Activity Plan, the more support and guidance students will need from school staff and community certifiers; however, it is beneficial for student to discover that in real life, skills are not learned or applied in isolation, but are used in combination. Sample Survival Skill Activity Plans are included in this guide to demonstrate single and multiple skill plans.

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sample survival skill
activity plans

Survival Skill Activity Plan

My name _____ Phone _____

Lead school staff person _____ Phone _____

Community certifier _____

Community certifier's area of expertise _____

Address _____

Directions _____

How I will get there: walk car bus bike other: _____

Mobility
Shelter
Health
Financial Independence
Communication
Community Participation
Self-awareness
Other (describe below):

Describe the skill you will learn:

The plan identifies contact information for students, school staff, and community certifiers.

Check boxes allow students to indicate which of seven skill sets the survival skill they're pursuing is related to. A space for "Other" allows schools to identify additional sets of skills.

Space is provided to describe one or more skills the student will acquire. Descriptions of the skill are intended to be simple and straightforward.

A master copy of this tool is included in the *Useful Tools* section of this guide.

List each activity you will do to acquire this skill:
Activities include steps you will take to learn the skill. For example, go to the Department of Motor Vehicles and pick up a driver's training manual.
List all the resources you will use:
People:
Places:
Things:
Date and time to review my activity plan with my teacher
Date:
Time:
Date and time to review my activity plan with my community certifier
Date:
Time:
Dates for learning my skill
From:
To:
Date and time to demonstrate my skill
Date:
Time:

Identifying all the steps needed to acquire a survival skill assists students in learning a process that can be applied throughout their lives.

Students can number each step or simply make a "laundry list." A critical survival skill is the ability to seek and find a wide variety of different resources in the community.

Developing a timeline for learning and certification helps students learn how to schedule their time.

A master copy of this tool is included in the *Useful Tools* section of this guide.

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Examples help students choose a variety of methods to demonstrate mastery of skills.

Specific criteria and standards for student performance are written in collaboration with the community certifier.

Examples of how to prove you have acquired a skill:

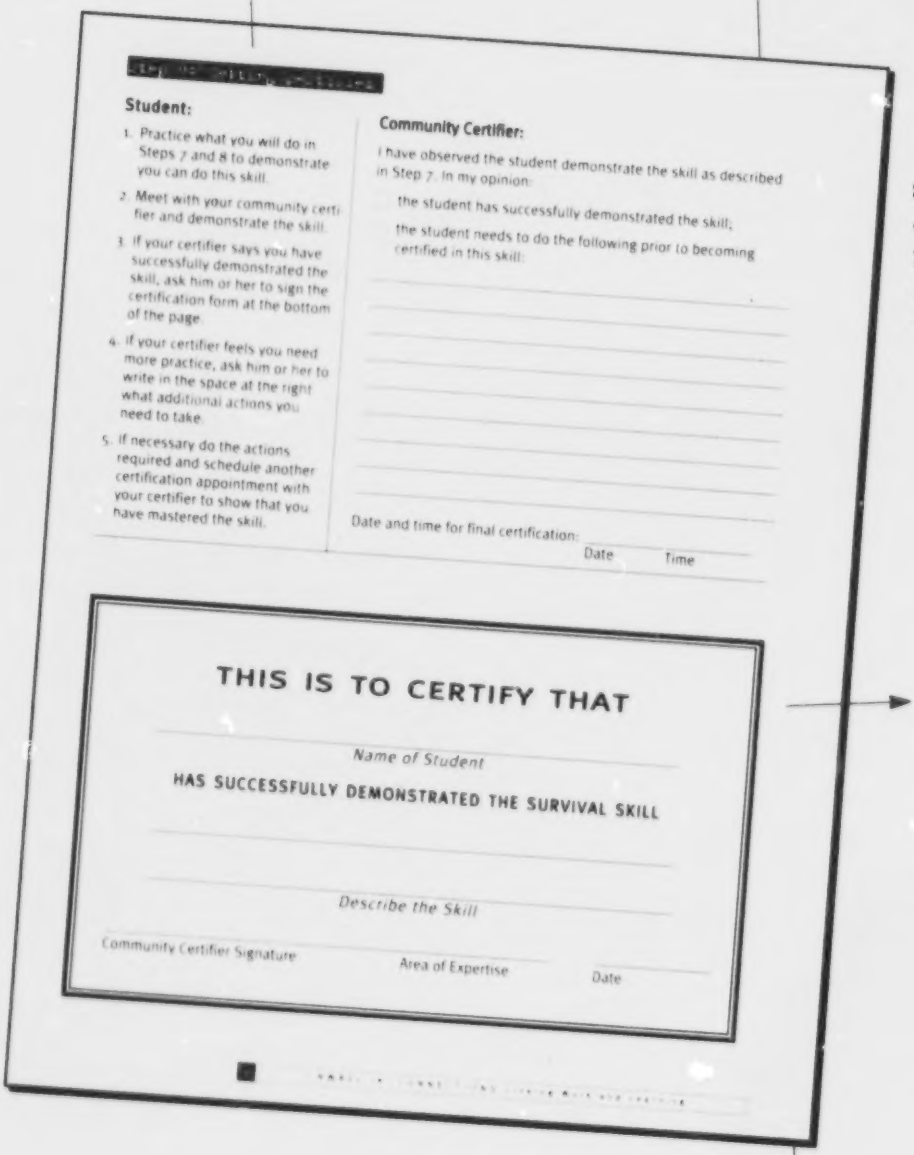
- **Demonstrate the skill** – Perform the survival skill in the presence of the community certifier. For example, change a tire or prepare a meal while the community certifier observes.
- **Produce a product** – Create something (such as a journal, monthly budget, or weekly food plan) that illustrates your mastery of the survival skill.
- **Show a picture** – Make a video of you performing the survival skill, or take before and after photos of the process.
- **Provide a certificate** – Obtain a certificate (such as a driver's license, voter registration card, or passport) that verifies you have acquired the survival skill.
- **Eyewitness accounts** – Present signed accounts testifying that someone observed you performing the survival skill.
- **Teach others** – Show others how to perform the survival skill.
- **Oral review** – Present information about the survival skill and answer questions from the community certifier.

List how you will demonstrate or prove that you have acquired the survival skill.

Have your community certifier review these and check the box to indicate approval.

Certification criteria might include a list of steps or specific activities (for example, 10 steps for what to do in case of a fire); questions testing specific knowledge; expectations for a level of performance; or specifications for a project. With the help of your community certifier, list the criteria that will be used to determine successful mastery of the survival skill.

A master copy of this tool is included in the *Useful Tools* section of this guide.



Student:

1. Practice what you will do in Steps 7 and 8 to demonstrate you can do this skill.
2. Meet with your community certifier and demonstrate the skill.
3. If your certifier says you have successfully demonstrated the skill, ask him or her to sign the certification form at the bottom of the page.
4. If your certifier feels you need more practice, ask him or her to write in the space at the right what additional actions you need to take.
5. If necessary do the actions required and schedule another certification appointment with your certifier to show that you have mastered the skill.

Community Certifier:

I have observed the student demonstrate the skill as described in Step 7. In my opinion:

the student has successfully demonstrated the skill;

the student needs to do the following prior to becoming certified in this skill:

Date and time for final certification: Date Time

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Name of Student

HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE SURVIVAL SKILL

Describe the Skill

Community Certifier Signature Area of Expertise Date

Step-by-step certification instructions help guide students and certifiers through the process.

Students retain copies of Activity Plans with signed certificates for portfolios and personal folders.

A master copy of this tool is included in the *Useful Tools* section of this guide.

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"While in school I'd like to be learning about the things that happen to normal people like getting married, having babies, getting a job, and stuff like that."

—Student

Providing survival skills instruction

Survival skills instruction can be structured in a variety of ways; it can be student-directed, delivered by community certifiers, or provided by school staff. The method you choose should complement the learning styles of your students. While some students will excel at taking responsibility for their own learning, others will require more ongoing support from adults.

Keep in mind that the purpose of survival skills is for students to demonstrate that they have acquired a specific skill. Participation in instruction does not in itself warrant certification; students must be able to demonstrate to a community certifier that they have mastered the skill.

- **Student-directed instruction**—Students can learn survial skills on their own in a number of ways, including:
  - *Reading books, magazines, journals or newspapers.* For example, a student might read from several different sources how to improve braking power on a bike by installing a brake booster brace (Mobility). The community certifier, a bike mechanic, would document that the student made an appropriate choice of equipment and correctly installed the brake brace.
  - *Watching or listening to instructional videos and tapes.* For example, a student might watch a video on preparing a balanced, three-course meal (Health). The community certifier, a dietitian, would watch the student prepare the food and verify that appropriate foods, cooking methods, and tools were used.
  - *Attending a community-sponsored seminar or workshop.* Hospitals, fire houses, police stations, local universities, and other community organizations frequently offer free or low-cost training. For example, students can participate in community activities teaching CPR (Health), fireproofing a home (Shelter), establishing a neighborhood watch (Community Participation), or public speaking (Communication).
  - *Talking with friends, family, and acquaintances.* Students should be encouraged to recruit neighbors, associates, family, and friends to teach them skills. For example, a student might ask a neighbor how to use a ham radio to send

emergency signals (Communication) or a relative to explain how to read and analyze nutrition tables (Health).

If students direct their own survival skill instruction through one or more of these approaches, it is still important for school staff to facilitate the process. Although students take responsibility for how they will learn a skill, school staff play an important role in helping them identify certifiers, locate necessary resources, and prepare for their interaction with community volunteers.

- **Community certifier instruction**—A community certifier's primary responsibilities are to approve Activity Plans, observe students demonstrating a skill, and certify that students have acquired skills. However, in some cases, the community certifier may also opt to provide survival skills instruction. To involve community certifiers in this way, you can:
  - *Invite a community certifier to provide a specific survival skill seminar at school.* This is most appropriate when several students are working on a particular survival skill at the same time and can meet as a group with a certifier at school.
  - *Arrange for a group of students to meet with a community certifier in the workplace.* This is ideal because students have more opportunities for hands-on learning at the workplace and can expand their awareness of career options.
  - *Schedule one-on-one meetings with community certifiers at either their place of business or the school.* Some community certifiers might feel shy about working with groups of students because it seems too much like teaching a class. You can suggest that they work with individual students, coaching them one-on-one as they would a co-worker.
- **School staff instruction**—Sometimes it is appropriate for school staff to deliver instruction for an entire class related to a particular survival skill. For example, the science teacher might discuss recycling (Community Participation) or the school counselor might teach conflict resolution (Communication). Even if instructed by school staff, students are still expected to demonstrate the skill to a community certifier.

S

survive

"I want to know how to apply the stuff I'm learning in class to real life. You know—have chances to to do things to prove whether or not I can make it on my own."

—Student

Documenting and certifying skills

Students document their survival skills by demonstrating to community certifiers they have acquired them. Depending on the skill, students choose their preferred way to prove what they have learned. To get certified, students perform the skill for a community certifier who, if satisfied with their demonstration of the skill, signs the Activity Plan.

For many survival skills, a community certifier can easily determine a student's skill mastery. For example, a bank officer can check paperwork to verify whether a student has learned how to balance a checkbook, open a savings account, or apply for a loan (Financial Independence). Other skills, however, such as handling grief (Self-Awareness) or knowing your neighborhood (Community Participation) may require some creativity to document. For example, a student who has chosen to learn different strategies for coping with grief might make a list of steps in the grieving process and explain personal experiences in a journal. The community certifier (a mental health worker) might interview the student and read the journal to verify that the student has acquired appropriate coping techniques. A student interested in knowing his or her neighborhood might produce a detailed map, record an oral history, and conduct a survey on how people feel about living in the area. In a conversation with the community certifier (community center worker) the student could present the map, audiotape, and survey results as proof of the investigation about the neighborhood and its history.

Below is a variety of ways students can document their learning:

- **Demonstrate the skill**—Students perform the skill in front of a community certifier. For example, complete a credit application (Financial Independence), maintain ethnic and cultural identity (Self-Awareness), or change a car tire (Mobility).
- **Produce a product**—Students can produce tangible evidence of a survival skill—such as a monthly budget, completed lease agreement, journal, painting, weekly food plan, or trip plan—to present to a community certifier for review.

- **Provide a certificate**—Items such as a driver's license, voter registration card, library card, or passport prove students have acquired a survival skill. A community certifier is not required for survival skills that can be verified with a certificate; school staff can sign the Activity Plan when students present a valid certificate of completion.

- **Show a picture**—Some survival skills, such as maintain a yard and garden (Shelter), participate in an issues-oriented parade (Community Participation), or care for the elderly (Health), cannot be easily demonstrated in front of a community certifier. In these instances students can document their learning by making a videotape of themselves performing the skill or taking a photo of its outcome. Pictures can then be presented to the community certifier.

- **Provide eyewitness accounts**—Some survival skills are not easily documented for demonstration in front of a community certifier because they require interaction with other people, such as skills in the Community Participation and Communication sets. For example, for a student to prove that he or she is able to use humor to deflate an argument, a real-life occurrence requiring this skill must be observed. In such instances, eyewitness accounts can be used to prove students' survival skill abilities. Friends, family, or strangers can be asked to complete an eyewitness account form that testifies that they have observed the student performing the skill. Either staff or a community certifier can negotiate with the student how many eyewitness accounts are required for certification.

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eyewitness account form

- **Teach others**—Students can demonstrate a survival skill by teaching the skill to others. For example, a group of students might provide a workshop on how to prevent AIDS (Health) to a younger class and be certified by a health worker for expertise in AIDS awareness.

- **Informal interview**—In some instances, community certifiers will want to interview and ask questions of students to assess how well they understand a skill. For example, explaining

what to do if you are the victim of a hit-and-run accident (Mobility), analyzing the impact of a ballot measure on the neighborhood (Community Participation), or explaining the risks of smoking for teenagers (Health).

These are only a few ways students can document their skills to demonstrate their learning—students, school staff, and community certifiers should be creative in thinking of ways to show that a skill has been acquired. The methods students use should be negotiated with school staff and community certifiers before meeting for final certification. If students do not successfully demonstrate a survival skill, the community certifier should indicate on the Activity Plan additional steps they need to take to be certified at a later date. It might take some students several attempts to become certified in certain skills.

Determining credit and grading

Should students receive academic credit for acquiring survival skills? Academic skills underlie survival skills learning and merit credit; however, whether credit is awarded depends on the structure of instruction and the expectations of the school district. Following are several examples of how some schools have addressed this question:

- Assign units of credit based on the number of hours it takes to complete an Activity Plan or acquire a survival skill
- Make completion of a specified number of survival skills equal to a test or term paper
- Require a specified number of survival skills to pass a course
- Do not give credit, but make survival skill learning a graduation requirement

Students are not typically graded on how well they acquire a survival skill—they can either demonstrate it or not. Some schools have implemented a pass/fail grading system. If students demonstrate the skill to the satisfaction of the community certifier, they are certified and "pass." If they do not satisfactorily demonstrate the skill, they return after more practice to get certified at a later date.

It is possible to grade students if the survival skills are documented and demonstrated using methods consistent with traditional school grading systems—such as making an oral presentation, producing a how-to video, and teaching other students. School staff can negotiate with students a standard for receiving a grade for products or activities that are part of demonstrating acquisition of a skill. If students receive grades for survival skills learning, it is the school's responsibility to set high standards and to communicate these expectations to students and community certifiers.

Orienting students

Orienting students is critical to ensuring their participation and enthusiasm. Helping them understand community-based, self-directed learning requires planning and patience. For many students, this could be their first experience working with adults in the community and taking responsibility for their own learning.

An effective student orientation should:

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student orientation exercises

- **Engage students in reflection**—Involve students in activities that help them to think about their education, work, and personal goals. Activities such as role plays and visualizations are helpful for introducing the concepts of survival skills and community-based learning.

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student fact sheet

- **Review program basics**—Define survival skills and discuss how learning survival skills complements school, life, and personal goals and leads to a productive and well-balanced life. Define what is meant by "self-directed, community-based learning," contrasting it with traditional classroom learning.

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sample survival skill activity plans

- **Explain how survival skills learning is structured**—Describe the structure your school has developed for survival skills instruction. Show students copies of completed Survival Skill Activity Plans and explain the procedures for identifying, choosing, acquiring, and demonstrating survival skills.

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roles and responsibilities of partners fact sheet

- **Describe the roles and responsibilities of partners**—Review the expectations for each partner—staff, students, and community certifiers. Emphasize the responsibility students assume in planning how, what, and when they learn. Explain that students will need to make appointments, arrange transportation, and meet with community certifiers. Point out that in some cases students might also be responsible for recruiting certifiers.

- **Review relevant rules**—Review issues such as missing a scheduled meeting with a community certifier or being unprepared to demonstrate a skill on the agreed-upon certification date. Outline the consequences if students fail to adhere to all relevant rules and regulations both at school and in the community.

- **Outline the personal and educational rewards**—Discuss what students will gain by entering the community to learn survival skills, interacting with community certifiers, and designing and completing their own Activity Plans. Emphasize that learning through real-life situations in the community will better prepare them to obtain their future goals.

- **Inform students about the expectations of learning in the community**—Do not make the assumption that students will be naturally comfortable and confident working with adults in the community. For many students, preparing for their first meeting with a community certifier will require learning an array of new survival skills, such as communicating clearly, dressing appropriately, keeping appointments, and sending thank-you notes. Allow ample time to introduce these skills to students and provide opportunities for them to practice them. Role playing is a fun and effective approach to improve students' self-confidence and help them prepare for "what if" situations—such as "What if my community certifier does not show up for my certification?" "What if I know I am going to be late for an appointment with my community certifier?" "What if a community certifier behaves or treats me inappropriately?"

These are only a few suggested topics to cover when orienting students. If possible, discuss such issues over time, giving students the chance to fully understand what survival skills are and why they are important.

"My advice to teachers is to concentrate on what kids are doing. Talk to them and explain things in a way they'll understand; be open and talk about your life experiences, not just school. Let everybody in the class get involved. Let kids make choices about their own learning."

—Student

"My purpose as a teacher is to help students learn how to figure things out so they will be able to continually use the process to figure life out."

—Teacher

Tips for supporting students

Students will require ongoing guidance as they venture into the community to acquire survival skills. Whether it is negotiating an Activity Plan to reflect a realistic timeline or accompanying a nervous student to a first meeting with a community certifier, school staff will need to be creative and thoughtful in determining how to best support students.

Following are some tips for how to work with students who are learning survival skills:

- **Help students set attainable goals**—Some students may be overly ambitious, setting lofty goals and underestimating how much time it will take to complete an Activity Plan. Others may be overly cautious and set their sights too low. The challenge is to help students realize their full potential and find their own pace. Sometimes you may need to help students rein in their plans, and at other times you will need to push them to take on more responsibilities.

- **Review each Activity Plan and negotiate any changes**—Whether they are working on standard or individual Activity Plans, school staff should discuss the plans with students so they are doable and meet the high standards established at the school.

- **Help students who are working on several activity plans at the same time develop a schedule for completion**—Students who take on more than one survival skill at a time might need additional help with planning deadlines and coordinating community certifiers' schedules. If unexpected events arise—foul weather, illness, cancelled appointments—it will be necessary to help students revise their original plans.

- **Teach teamwork skills to students who choose to work as a group**—Help students learn and practice strategies for working in teams. Allow time for team meetings and check in with groups to ensure they are on track and that members are working together equitably.

- **Help students anticipate and overcome challenges**—Even the most well-thought-out Activity Plan can go awry. For example, a layoff at a local business could result in the loss of a

community certifier, or a delayed bus could cause a student to miss a scheduled appointment. These challenges are part of daily life; learning to resolve them quickly and with minimal stress is something students will need to know not only to complete survival skills, but also to handle problems throughout their lives.

- **Recognize that different students have different learning styles and comfort zones**—Respect the effort required to complete survival skills certification and help students make plans that are personally challenging but not overwhelming. For some students, riding the bus across town to a new neighborhood will require great effort and result in a deep sense of accomplishment. For others, getting across town on a bus is already an acquired skill.

- **Celebrate student successes**—Let students know that completing survival skills is an important accomplishment by recognizing their successes. Keep a list of all the survival skills students acquire on a large poster in the classroom, submit articles to the school and community newspaper, invite local television coverage, or send congratulation notes home to parents. One school adopted an approach similar to the system of awarding badges used by boys' and girls' scouting troops. Instead of badges, students received a bead for every skill they acquired. Students threaded the beads onto chains or leather thongs, which they wore around their necks or tied to their backpacks.

Remember: most adolescents are eager for opportunities to make decisions and assume adult responsibilities. Learning survival skills in the community helps them realize a new kind of independence, but at the same time interacting with adults in new settings can raise feelings of insecurity. Students might mask anxiety about venturing into the community with an "I-could-care-less" attitude or other less-than-enthusiastic behaviors. School staff need to be sensitive to students concerns and patiently encourage all to participate.

Recruiting community certifiers

Community certifiers are members of the community who, by virtue of their experience or profession, are experts in a particular area. Certifiers volunteer to help students develop Activity Plans to learn survival skills and verify students' skill mastery. Recruited by either school staff, parents, or students, community certifiers can also provide instruction to students and design standard Activity Plans for skills related to their expertise.

Community certifiers are the people around you every day in your community. For example, an accountant can verify that a student can accurately complete state and federal tax returns (Financial Independence).

Some strategies for identifying and recruiting certifiers are to:

- **Start with the people you already know**—Begin with the contacts—formal or informal, professional or personal—you already have. Look around your school and recruit staff who have appropriate skills and are interested in participating. For example, a school staff member who owns several rental properties may agree to serve as a certifier for completing a rental application (Shelter).

- **Find "advocates," supporters of community-based learning who are willing to promote the concept to their peers**—Seek out people and organizations in your community that can help you leverage support for survival skills learning. Contact organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, trade or industry associations, parent/teacher organizations, retirement associations, Toastmasters, Rotary clubs, and small business development centers. Request an opportunity to be included on their meeting agendas to present your ideas or ask for a copy of their membership lists to contact members one-on-one.

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community certifier
fact sheet

- **Use a personal approach**—If possible, arrange a face-to-face meeting with potential certifiers. Bring copies of fact sheets and other information about survival skills to leave as reference materials.

- **Recruit for diversity**—Be sure your community certifiers represent the racial and cultural groups in your school and community as well as various ages, abilities, and both sexes. Try

to find people who are in nontraditional occupations to counter stereotypical ideas your students might harbor. Local churches, ethnic and cultural organizations, or chapters of professional and trade organizations may be helpful.

- **Define "expert" broadly**—Community certifiers should have expertise in a skill area, but that does not necessarily mean they are employed by a business in that field. For example, an electrician who grows prize-winning roses could certify a student's ability to maintain a garden (Shelter), a retired teacher with a strong stock portfolio could certify a student's ability to identify safe, long-term investments (Financial Independence). Experts are all around us, but be sure their expertise is recognized by community standards.

- **Enlist the help of students to identify community certifiers in the neighborhood around the school**—Involve students in a campaign to recruit certifiers by asking for their suggestions and encouraging them to help identify certifiers within walking distance of the school. If students canvass the neighborhood, train them in how to approach potential certifiers appropriately. Students recruiting neighborhood certifiers should always work in pairs or groups during school hours and should check in with the school office before going home or back to class.

When you make your initial contact with a certifier, whether by phone or in person, be sure to clarify whether you are seeking someone who can certify students' skills, provide instruction, design a standard Activity Plan, or a combination of these.

Community certifiers can serve as role models for students; whenever possible, try to match students with certifiers who share similar interests or backgrounds. For students with special needs of any kind, make it a priority to find community certifiers who understand their challenges. Maintain accurate files of your community certifiers with names, addresses, phone numbers, directions, transportation routes, scheduling information, and comments to remind you of their unique features and strengths.

"One of our departments here is always too busy to certify kids. It is their loss because no matter how busy you are, you should just try it. It is fun, interesting, and an eye opener. It is so rewarding to believe that you have contributed to students' success. My advice to other employers is to just try it—you will love it."

—Community certifier

"Because community certifiers are as different and varied as students, the best way to train them both is to give them a clear definition of the purpose and then just have them do it."

—Teacher

Orienting and supporting community certifiers

Depending on the availability and preference of community certifiers, you can conduct either individual or group orientation sessions. A group orientation is preferable because it saves time, and it allows certifiers a chance to meet one another and exchange ideas.

An effective community certifier orientation should:

- **Review program basics**—Define survival skills, why they are important, and why the community is a critical learning resource. Describe what students will be doing both in school and in the community. Encourage certifiers to identify the survival skills that they think are important for young people.
- **Describe program procedures**—Carefully explain the process of writing Activity Plans, and documenting and certifying skills.
- **Describe the roles and responsibilities of partners**—Review what is expected of each partner—school staff, students, and community certifiers.

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roles and responsibilities of partners fact sheet

- **Give tips on working with young people**—Take into account that for many adults in the community, working with young people will be a new experience. Any information you can provide on how to work with students and what to expect from adolescents will be helpful.
- **Provide an orientation packet**—Pull together essential information—such as a description of survival skills learning, a list of certifier responsibilities, a sample Survival Skill Activity Plan, and a contact number at the school—to give the community certifier to refer to after the orientation.

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community certifier fact sheet

- **Allow time for questions and answers**—The orientation is your chance to share information essential to the success of your students; therefore, leave ample time for questions and answers to ensure you are not overlooking any issues that are central to the interests and concerns of community certifiers.

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sample survival skill activity plans

To provide ongoing support to participating community certifiers:

- **Keep in touch with them after they begin working with students**—If possible, meet community certifiers at their place

of business to determine whether the space is safe and to develop a relationship that encourages open communication. During follow-up conversations, be sure to ask certifiers if they have any suggestions for improving survival skills learning. Encourage them to identify additional survival skill opportunities they or their colleagues might provide students.

- **Respond quickly to community certifiers' concerns**—Likely, from time to time, community certifiers will express concerns regarding students, the certification process, or scheduling. Try to handle these issues as fast and efficiently as possible; engage the certifier in strategizing ways to prevent problems.

- **Remember that community certifiers are valued volunteers**—Because they are donating their time and expertise, make a special effort to let community certifiers know how much their participation is appreciated. For example, students should be encouraged to write thank-you notes, or certifiers' names might be published in school and local newspapers. Businesses that donate space and encourage their employees to participate might be given a framed certificate of recognition. A year-end celebration for all community certifiers and participating students might become an annual school event.

Collecting resource materials

Students will need a wide variety of resources—such as phone books, brochures, newspapers, pamphlets, city maps, and bus schedules—to use as they acquire survival skills. While locating resources is an important survival skill in itself, it is unrealistic to expect students to hunt down basic sources of information every time they learn a survival skill. Many resources can be stored easily at school in files that can be accessed by everyone.

The best advice for creating resource files is to keep the process simple. Choose a location for the files where all students can get to them throughout the day. Use file cabinets with hanging folders, clearly identifying each folder and organizing them alphabetically. Enlist the help of students in developing and maintaining the files.

School staff and students can collect free materials—such as brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, catalogs, and annual reports—from local agencies and businesses. Certifiers might be able to contribute items like first-aid manuals, tax information guides, and consumer literature from their workplaces. You can also make collecting materials part of students' orientation to the community. For example, a scavenger hunt that requires students to locate resources from the library, visitor's information center, department of motor vehicles, American Red Cross, United Way, a travel agency, government agencies, and local hospital both introduces students to the community and provides useful materials.

Obviously, not all materials students need can be housed at the school; some files will need to direct students to information available offsite. Initially, it may be difficult to collect the necessary resources, but over time, as students complete activities for different skills and more community certifiers become involved, you will collect a wealth of useful information.

survival
skills

useful tools

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This section includes tools to help you structure survival skills learning at your school. Camera-ready copies of these tools, which you can duplicate for your own use, are packaged separately.

Mobility

No matter where you are headed—around town or overseas—you need to know how to get there. Whether you travel by bike, bus, burro, subway, car, train, plane, or on foot, you need to know how to handle transportation issues like tickets, reservations, schedules, flat tires, map reading, cancellations, and accidents.

Survival Skills

- Read and use a map
- Read and understand bus, train, and plane schedules
- Use public transportation
- Obtain a driver's license
- Operate and maintain an automobile
- Purchase a car
- Know what to do in an automobile accident
- Implement emergency road procedures
- Compare and select automobile insurance
- Plan an overnight trip or vacation
- Make train, bus, or plane reservations and purchase tickets
- Obtain a passport
- Identify and secure different types of lodging
- Identify barriers to and alternative modes of travel for persons with disabilities

...you need to know how to get where you are going.

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Auto mechanic
- Ticket counter staff
- Auto salesperson
- Bicycle shop owner
- Travel agent
- Auto insurance agent
- Auto club representative
- Driving instructor
- Hotel manager

Shelter

What kind of a space do you want to call home? An apartment? A trailer? A dormitory? A house? Where you choose to live depends on the lifestyle you prefer and what you can afford. You will need to know how to find the right place and to create a home that makes you feel safe and comfortable.

Survival Skills

- Analyze the costs and benefits of living with family or roommates vs. living independently
- Understand and use the housing section of the classified ads
- Find an apartment or house to rent
- Complete a lease agreement
- Complete the necessary forms and applications to buy a home
- Obtain renters' or homeowners' insurance
- Contact utility companies and open accounts for gas, electric, and telephone service
- Do home repairs
- Maintain yard and garden
- Develop a home maintenance routine
- Clean a home efficiently
- Weatherize your living space
- Plan how to furnish your home within a budget
- Research a city or neighborhood you might like to live in

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Apartment manager
- Real estate agent
- Carpenter or home repairer
- Landscape architect, gardener or nursery employee
- Interior designer
- Landlord
- College housing office
- Furniture store employee
- Chamber of Commerce representative
- Home cleaning service
- Utility company representatives (phone, gas, electric, cable)

the point is... **...you need to have a roof over your head.**

Health

To realize your goals, you need to give your body, brain, and heart what they need to keep you healthy, happy, and strong.

Survival Skills

- Prepare and eat healthy, well-balanced meals daily
- Read and adapt recipes to cook tasty and nutritious food
- Read and analyze nutrition labels on store packaging
- Compute the cost-per-serving of store products for "best-buy" shopping
- Plan a doable fitness routine
- Maintain good personal hygiene
- Know the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse and where to get help
- Understand the health risks of using tobacco products
- Recognize the symptoms of depression and know where to get help
- Recognize the symptoms of eating disorders and know where to get treatment
- Prevent unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection
- Implement a plan for effectively dealing with stress
- Choose a health insurance plan
- Select and regularly visit a health care provider and a dentist
- Administer emergency first aid
- Care for injuries and ailments not requiring a doctor
- Read and follow directions for prescriptions and over-the-counter medications

...you have to maintain your body and brain.

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Nutritionist or dietitian
- Public health nurse
- Chef or cook
- Consumer advocate
- Coach or personal fitness trainer
- Drug and alcohol counselor
- Family planning agent
- Health insurance agent
- Red Cross staff
- Firefighter or paramedic

Financial independence

If you dream of living in your own apartment, having a car, and going out with friends on the weekends, you will need money. To make a steady income you need an education, a job, and a financial plan to meet your expenses and save for the future. Money can't buy happiness, but how you earn and manage it determines the kind of lifestyle you have.

Survival Skills

- Explore and develop career goals
- Identify resources for finding a job
- Complete a job application
- Write a resume and cover letter
- Prepare for and go through a job interview
- Get and keep a job
- Get more education or training
- Identify and understand the deductions taken from a paycheck
- Investigate how to start and operate your own business
- Plan and stick to a monthly budget
- Develop a savings plan and open a savings account
- Complete state and federal tax returns
- Investigate investment opportunities
- Open and maintain a checking account
- Complete credit applications
- Read and understand credit statements, contracts, and fees
- Identify the benefits and risks of credit
- Investigate and select life and property insurance plans
- Develop a retirement plan

Suggested Community Certifiers

- State employment office staff
- Personnel manager
- Bank or loan officer
- Financial advisor
- Investment consultant
- Accountant
- Tax return preparer
- Credit department manager
- Insurance agent

the point is...

...you have to have money and know how to manage it.

Communication

Every day we communicate with a wide range of people in a variety of ways—we talk at home and on the bus, we use phones and e-mail, we leave messages on answering machines and send letters, we talk to friends, customers, co-workers, and family members. Good communication skills—clearly conveying your thoughts and listening carefully to others—affect the relationships you form and your ability to realize your goals.

Survival Skills

- Identify and express thoughts and feelings
- Practice effective speaking and listening techniques
- Develop effective writing styles (personal and business)
- Interpret body language
- Explore and be sensitive to cross-cultural communication issues
- Study and develop suitable responses to bias and other forms of discrimination
- Ask for help
- Cope with difficult people
- Cultivate appropriate manners and etiquette
- Nurture relationships with significant others
- Develop positive relationships with peers
- Demonstrate positive parenting techniques
- Care for the elderly
- Develop and use conflict resolution skills
- Practice public speaking
- Be proficient in the use of computers
- Use electronic communication equipment, including phones, fax and e-mail, and Internet

the point is...

...we all have to talk and listen to one another.

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Public speaking club member
- Therapist, counselor, or social worker
- Language arts teacher
- Drama teacher or actor
- Event planner
- Telemarketer
- Youth group leader
- Human resources manager
- Office manager
- Computer technician

Self-awareness

Some skills we practice over and over again, and our mastery of them changes as we change. Think about it. You are a much different you than you were at age eight. Learning about ourselves is a lifelong process with rewards directly related to our personal choices and goals. We must all make choices—often difficult, sometimes risky—about who we want to be and how we can best pursue our dreams.

Survival Skills

- Identify personal strengths and areas for improvement
- Define and enforce personal boundaries
- Formulate short- and long-term goals
- Use a critical thinking process in decisionmaking
- Develop personal coping skills
- Develop a network of positive and supportive people
- Explore spiritual development
- Develop and maintain a sense of humor
- Learn something new regularly
- Do something daily that makes you happy
- Detach from others engaged in dangerous or abusive behavior
- Practice self-defense techniques
- Learn strategies for dealing with death and grief, and know where to get support and help
- Maintain your ethnic and cultural identity

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Guidance, drug and alcohol, or family counselor
- Therapist
- Clergyperson or rabbi
- Parent or guardian
- Youth group leader
- Police officer
- Crisis center staff
- Health care providers
- Self-defense or martial arts instructor
- Cultural center staff

...to be happy you have to know what you want, what you need, and how to get it.

Community participation

Everyone belongs to a community. Think about it. Your family, your circle of friends, your neighborhood, the town or city you live in, the school you attend, and the country you live in all represent a community that you belong to. Everyone in a community has rights and responsibilities; the more you participate and contribute, the better you will understand that your involvement makes a difference.

Survival Skills

- Understand basic functions and structure of government
- Understand basic legal rights
- Identify resources in your neighborhood
- Help your neighbors
- Develop knowledge of and respect for different cultures
- Be aware of current issues (local, national, worldwide)
- Become an active member of city, county, or neighborhood associations
- Volunteer for an agency or program in your community
- Participate in issues-oriented parades, fairs, or fundraisers
- Get a voter registration card and vote
- Access public and private agencies
- Identify and use free resources in your community
- Obtain a library card and use the library
- Use a world language
- Understand your rights as a citizen or resident
- Know what to do if you are wrongfully accused of a crime

Suggested Community Certifiers

- Librarian
- Information and referral specialist
- Attorney
- Legislative aide
- Neighbor watch staff
- Environmental agency staff
- Non-profit agency staff
- Volunteer coordinator
- Language instructor
- Journalist
- Diversity trainer

the point is... **...we all need to support and help each other.**

Survival Skill Activity Plan

Step 1: Basic information

My name _____

Lead school staff person _____ Phone _____

Community certifier _____ Phone _____

Community certifier's area of expertise _____

Address _____

Directions _____

_____

_____

How I will get there: ☐ walk ☐ car ☐ bus ☐ bike ☐ other: _____

Step 2: Skill set

- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Shelter
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Financial Independence
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Community Participation
- ☐ Self-awareness
- ☐ Other (describe below):

_____

_____

_____

Step 3: Skill to acquire

Describe the skill you will learn:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

On to Step 4 --->

Step 4: what I will do to acquire this skill

List each activity you will do to acquire this skill:

Activities include steps you will take to learn the skill. For example, go to the department of motor vehicles and pick up a driver's training manual.

Step 5: resources I will use to acquire this skill

List all the resources you will use:

People: _____

Places: _____

Things: _____

Step 6: when I will be certified

Date and time to review my activity plan with my teacher	Date and time to review my activity plan with my community certifier	Dates for learning my skill	Date and time to demonstrate my skill
Date: _____	Date: _____	From: _____	Date: _____
Time: _____	Time: _____	To: _____	Time: _____

Or to Step 7 --->

Step 7: How I will prove what I've learned

Examples of how to prove you have acquired a skill:

- **Demonstrate the skill** – Perform the survival skill in the presence of the community certifier. For example, change a tire or prepare a meal while the community certifier observes.
- **Produce a product** – Create something (such as a journal, monthly budget, or weekly food plan) that illustrates your mastery of the survival skill.
- **Show a picture** – Make a video of you performing the survival skill, or take before and after photos of the process.
- **Provide a certificate** – Obtain a certificate (such as a driver's license, voter registration card, or passport) that verifies you have acquired the survival skill.
- **Eyewitness accounts** – Present signed accounts testifying that someone observed you performing the survival skill.
- **Teach others** – Show others how to perform the survival skill.
- **Oral review** – Present information about the survival skill and answer questions from the community certifier.

Have your community certifier review these and check the box to indicate approval.

List how you will demonstrate or prove that you have acquired the survival skill.

☐ _____

_____

☐ _____

_____

☐ _____

_____

Step 8: Checklist of certification criteria

Certification criteria might include a list of steps or specific activities (for example, 10 steps for what to do in case of a fire); questions testing specific knowledge; expectations for a level of performance; or specifications for a project. With the help of your community certifier, list the criteria that will be used to determine successful mastery of the survival skill.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

On to Step 9 →

Step 9: Getting certified

Student:

1. Practice what you will do in Steps 7 and 8 to demonstrate you can do this skill.
2. Meet with your community certifier and demonstrate the skill.
3. If your certifier says you have successfully demonstrated the skill, ask him or her to sign the certification form at the bottom of the page.
4. If your certifier feels you need more practice, ask him or her to write in the space at the right what additional actions you need to take.
5. If necessary, do the actions required and schedule another certification appointment with your certifier to show that you have mastered the skill.

Community Certifier:

I have observed the student demonstrate the skill as described in Step 7. In my opinion:

- ☐ the student has successfully demonstrated the skill;
- ☐ the student needs to do the following prior to becoming certified in this skill:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date and time for final certification: _____ _____
Date Time

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

_____
Name of Student

HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE SURVIVAL SKILL

_____

_____
Describe the Skill

_____ _____ _____
Community Certifier Signature Area of Expertise Date

Eyewitness Account Form

Student Information

Name _____

Survival skill _____

_____

Student: Be sure to explain to your eyewitness what you are doing and why. Keeping a copy of Step 8 of your Activity Plan with you can help you explain what is considered proof of skill accomplishment.

Witness Information

Name _____

Occupation _____

Relationship to student (parent, brother/sister, neighbor, friend, teacher, community member, etc.) _____

Date observed _____ Time _____ (*circle* a.m. or p.m.)

Place _____

Eyewitness Account

The student for whom you are completing this form has asked you to be an eyewitness to support that he or she has learned how to do the above survival skill. Please provide the following information. When you have finished, please sign and date the form and return it to the student.

1. Briefly describe what you observed the student doing that demonstrates the student's use of the survival skill described above:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In your opinion, did the student's performance indicate that he or she has *successfully* demonstrated the skill? ☐ Yes. ☐ No, needs more practice. If you checked no, please explain why below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature _____ Date _____

Student orientation exercises

The purpose of orientation is to help students understand the importance of survival skills and to prepare them for taking responsibility for their own learning. The following exercises are to help students think about their futures, reflect on the survival skills they have, and identify the ones they need to achieve their goals.

"The most difficult decision I think I'll make about my life is what kind of life I will have—happy, boring, dull, fun, or exciting."

—Student

Exercise 1: Picture your future now

- **Goal:** Connect survival skills with planning for the future
- **Strategy:** Visualization and group discussion
- **Step 1:** Tell students they are going to visit their futures by closing their eyes and imagining themselves five years after high school graduation. In a quiet tone, read the following paragraphs, pausing after each question to give students time to visualize the scene.

Imagine awakening on a beautiful spring morning five years after your high school graduation. Slowly get up and walk around your bedroom and then through the other rooms in the place that you live. What is it like? Is it a house, an apartment, a condominium? Do you rent or own this place? What do you see as you walk through the rooms? How many rooms are there? Is the furniture new or comfortably worn? Are you walking across hardwood floors or carpet? Are the rooms neat and clean, lived-in, or disorganized?

As you walk through your home, is anyone there with you? What is the person like? What kind of a relationship do you have? How long have you been together? Are there other people in your home? Children? Friends? Family members? Do you have pets or plants in your home?

What do you see when you look out the windows? A busy city street, trees, a mountain, the ocean, a residential street, a skyscraper?

Student orientation exercises cont.

Picture yourself preparing for the day. How do you feel about the day starting—happy, worried, calm, in a hurry? Walk to your closet and open the door. What kind of clothes are you going to wear? Will you choose a casual pair of jeans, a suit, or a uniform? Will you get dressed in a hurry and be out the door or spend more time preparing for the day? Where are you getting ready to go? To work? To school? What are you taking with you as you leave for the day? A backpack? Books? A musical instrument? A briefcase? A tool box? Lunch?

How are you going to get to where you are going? Ride the bus? Take a cab? Walk? Bike? Drive your car? Which of these would you prefer? Do you own your own car? What make and model? Are you traveling alone or with someone?

Now that you've arrived at the place where you work or go to school, what does it look like? Is it an office building? Hospital? Scientific laboratory? Construction site? A store? What is your work space like? Do you sit behind a desk or stand behind a counter? Do you work indoors or outside? What is the first thing you do on the job? Do you use a computer? Do you attend meetings? Do you supervise others? Do you interact with customers or clients? Do you work full-time or part-time? Do you mostly work alone or as part of a team? If you are at school, what kind of school is it? A large university? A small college? A vocational training center? A culinary institute? What are you studying? Music? Speech pathology? Engineering? Computer technology? What kind of job do you plan on pursuing after you finish your education?

Imagine that it is payday—you get your check for one month of work. How much is the check for? Is it enough to pay the rent or make a mortgage payment, buy food, pay the electric and cable bills? How much money do you put in a savings account? What are some things that you are saving for? A house? A vacation? Tuition? A new stereo?

As you prepare to go home, what plans do you have for the evening? Will you meet friends to play basketball? Go for a swim? Will you cook food at home or go out to a restaurant? How do you feel at the end of your day? Tired? Happy? Satisfied?

- **Step 2:** When you finish reading the visualization, ask students to share brief descriptions of how they imagined their future. Some questions you might ask are:
  - What was it like to think ahead five years and imagine your future life?
  - What are choices that you can make today that will affect your future life?
  - What skills do you need to achieve your goals that you do not have now?
- **Step 3:** Ask students to look at the Survival Skill Sets and check off survival skills they need to learn to achieve what they've visualized. Assist students in identifying additional skills they would like to acquire. Encourage them to write down highlights from the visualization exercise in a journal for reference as they develop Survival Skill Activity Plans.

Exercise 2: What these hands can do

- **Goal:** Identify the survival skills students have and the ones they need to acquire
- **Strategy:** Writing
- **Step 1:** Ask students to think about everything they can now do on their own. Then provide them with a blank sheet of brightly colored paper and ask them to trace their hands on the sheets.
- **Step 2:** Ask students to fill the space inside the outline of their hands with lists of what they can do with their own hands. Encourage students to fill the entire

Student orientation exercises cont.

space. Help get them started with examples, like drive a car, ride a bike, do dishes, paint, plant a garden, change a car tire, and prepare a meal. Allow students time to think and write. Students can work in teams and share ideas, but each is responsible for his or her own writing.

- **Step 3:** When they have finished, discuss how it felt to identify all the skills they already have. Were students surprised? Disappointed? Was it difficult to think of what they know how to do?

- **Step 4:** Now ask students to think of things they would like to be able to do that they currently do not know how to do, or know how to do but would like to improve. Ask students to write their comments in the empty space outside of and surrounding the outline of their hands. Ask for a few volunteers to share their ideas.

- **Step 5:** Distribute the Survival Skill Sets and discuss how they are the same as or different from the lists the students made. Encourage students to use this activity as a reference for developing Survival Skill Activity Plans.

Roles and responsibilities of partners fact sheet

From forming positive and lasting relationships to planning for the future, from taking a trip to dealing with an emergency—survival skills are the things people have to do to make it on their own.

Teaching and learning survival skills require students, school staff, parents/guardians, and community members to work together. Because they engage in activities that differ from their traditional roles, all partners need to understand their responsibilities.

Student

- Think about your own personal goals and identify the survival skills needed to achieve them
- Write a Survival Skill Activity Plan for the survival skills you choose and review the plan with school staff
- Take responsibility for learning survival skills by finding the resources you need in the community and asking for help from staff, community members, family, friends, and neighbors
- Identify and contact your community certifier and schedule a meeting to review your Activity Plan; schedule additional meetings if you need further instruction or assistance
- Learn about and practice the survival skill you have chosen
- Make an appointment with your community certifier when you are ready to demonstrate your mastery of the survival skill
- Demonstrate the survival skill you have learned
- Ask the community certifier to sign your Activity Plan, if you successfully demonstrate you have acquired the skill; if the community certifier feels you need to practice the skill more, discuss what you need to do to improve, schedule a return appointment, practice the skill, and try again

Roles and responsibilities of partners fact sheet cont.

- Write the community certifier a thank-you letter
- Have fun learning new skills

■ **School staff**

- Seek advice from community representatives to define skills that reflect local needs
- Develop and coordinate a system for providing instruction and engaging students in learning in the community
- Identify, recruit, and orient community certifiers
- Support and maintain regular contact with community certifiers
- Help students choose survival skills
- Orient students and prepare them for the responsibilities of learning in the community
- Help develop Survival Skill Activity Plans by collaborating with community certifiers and other school staff to design standard plans and/or by working with students to write individual plans
- Provide ongoing support to students
- Arrange group and individual meetings with students and community certifiers, as necessary
- Establish a system for filing resources, student Activity Plans, records of certification, and lists of community certifiers
- Organize a year-end event to celebrate student success and thank community certifiers for their participation

■ **Community certifiers**

- Participate in a survival skills orientation session and/or review materials provided by school staff
- Understand the process for certifying student acquisition of survival skills

- Make resources, such as printed materials, available to students
- Provide instruction and opportunities for students to practice skills (optional)
- Review each student's Survival Skill Activity Plan
- Schedule and confirm times for students to meet at your place of business or other appropriate locations to study materials, receive instruction, or report on their progress
- Schedule a time and place for final certification to evaluate the student's performance of the skill
- Sign the student's Activity Plan if performance standards are met. If not, discuss further preparation needs and schedule a future certification appointment
- Review effectiveness of interactions with students and make suggestions for improving certification procedures to school staff
- Recruit friends and business associates to volunteer as community certifiers (optional)
- Enjoy the opportunity to help students prepare to meet the challenge of independence

■ **Parents/guardians**

- Encourage your child to talk about goals for life after high school and help identify the skills necessary to achieve them
- Help your child identify resources, write Activity Plans, identify community certifiers, and practice skills
- Volunteer as a community certifier (optional)
- Recruit local employers, neighbors, and peers to be community certifiers (optional)
- Talk to your child about your own life experiences regarding survival skills you had—or did not have—when you started out on your own

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"How to make healthy and wise decisions which concern every aspect of my life is what I wish I knew how to do."

—Student

Student fact sheet

What are survival skills?

Survival skills are the skills you need to be independent and to achieve your goals. Knowing how to get a job is a survival skill. So is knowing how to use public transportation, buy a car, and rent an apartment. Learning these and other survival skills will help you achieve what you want in your life.

What is the purpose?

The purpose of learning survival skills is to help you:

- Become an independent, productive, and satisfied person
- Think about your personal interests and goals
- Use resources in the community and learn from community members
- Learn about careers and lifestyle opportunities you may have never considered
- Recognize the elements of a well-balanced life
- Develop lifelong learning habits
- Learn to access, navigate, and contribute to the community

How is learning structured?

There are two important facts about learning survival skills that you need to know:

- **You decide what skills you need to know and how you are going learn them.** With the help of a teacher and/or member of the community, you develop a plan for learning survival skills. Once your plan is ready, it is up to you to learn and demonstrate the skills.

To help you think about different survival skills, your teacher will give you lists of survival skills to help plan what you want to learn.

- **Learning survival skills happens in the community.** You will be outside of your classroom—at businesses, community agencies, with neighbors—to learn and demonstrate skills. For example, the only way to get a driver's license is at the department of motor vehicles, and the best place to determine whether your dog is in good health is at a veterinarian's office.

What do I have to do?

The basics steps in learning survival skills are to:

- **Choose which survival skills to learn.** Think about your future and your goals and determine which survival skills you need to learn. In addition to your list, your school might require that you learn certain skills that are important for all members of your community to have.
- **Complete a Survival Skills Activity Plan provided by your teachers.** The Activity Plan will help you organize the activities and resources you will need to learn a skill. It will also help you plan how you will demonstrate what you have learned.
- **Find materials and resources at school and in the community that will help you learn the skill.** Resources include people (parents, friends, neighbors, and community members); places (library, fire station, businesses, and offices); and things (books, magazines, videos, newspapers, and phone books). Do not be shy to ask people about survival skills—you will be surprised how easy it is and how much information you will find.
- **After learning about the skill, practice it until you feel you are ready to prove that you can do it.** You can use a variety

"I am going to have to learn how to cook when I'm on my own because you can't speed dial pizza all the time."

—Student

of ways to show you know how to do something. For example, you can demonstrate the skill; produce a product (like a lease agreement or a bike you built yourself); or provide a certificate (such as a passport or driver's license). These and other ideas for how to prove that you can do a skill are listed on the Survival Skills Activity Plan.

- **Find an expert in the community who can certify that you can perform the skill.** The experts in your community are people with a special talent or ability (such as repairing cars, programming computers, and providing health care) who have volunteered to work with you and your school. They observe you demonstrating a survival skill related to their expertise, and decide whether or not you have mastered it. These experts are called "community certifiers." Depending on the system developed by your school, you will either recruit your own community certifiers or be placed with people recruited by your school. Your teacher will explain the system and provide training in things like recruiting certifiers, scheduling appointments, and arranging transportation.

"It is good for me to learn skills now like how to buy a house so I don't have to pay someone later to show me."

—Student

What will I get out of learning survival skills?

You will learn the skills you need to get you where you want to go in your life. You will learn how to find and use resources in your community and how to make connections with adults and organizations that can help you after you leave high school.

What you get out of learning survival skills depends on what you put into it. The more skills you acquire related to what you want to do in your life, the better prepared and more confident you will be.

Parent/guardian fact sheet

What are survival skills?

Survival skills are the skills you need to be independent and to achieve your goals. Knowing how to get a job is a survival skill. So is knowing how to use public transportation, buy a car, and rent an apartment. Survival skills are the things all youth must learn to make it on their own and to function as productive and satisfied citizens.

"I think that to be happy or successful in life you need to have a good-paying job that you enjoy, at least one pet, and a stable home. And you need the basic everyday things like food, lots of experience in many different things, and a good education.

—Student

Why teach survival skills?

How prepared were you for life when you left high school? All students, whether they enter the job market immediately after graduation or continue on to higher education, need to master certain skills to conduct their daily lives and achieve their goals. Specifically, learning survival skills will help students to:

- Become an independent, productive, and satisfied person
- Think about personal interests and goals
- Use resources in the community and learn from community members
- Learn about careers and lifestyle opportunities they may have never considered
- Recognize the elements of a well-balanced life
- Develop lifelong learning habits
- Learn to access, navigate, and contribute to the community

Who decides the survival skills students need?

Wnatever they'd like to be doing after they graduate from high school, students need to acquire bottom-line skills. Based on their personal plans, they identify survival skills necessary to

achieve their goals. Often, parents, school staff, and community members will also identify essential survival skills for all students in their community.

How is learning survival skills structured?

There are three essential elements of survival skills learning:

- **Students engage in self-directed learning.** Students assume a great deal of responsibility when learning survival skills. They identify which skills to learn, complete a written plan for acquiring them, meet and consult with community certifiers, and successfully demonstrate they can do the skill.
- **Learning survival skills is community-based.** To acquire survival skills, students do a good portion of their learning outside of the classroom—such as at businesses, community agencies, and with neighbors. For example, the only way to get a driver's license is at the department of motor vehicles and the best place to determine whether your dog is in good health is at a veterinarian's office.
- **Students access community certifiers.** Community certifiers are people in the community who have an expert talent or ability (such as repairing cars, programming computers, or providing health care). Community certifiers are volunteers who observe a student demonstrating a survival skill related to their expertise, and decide whether the student has mastered it. For example, an accountant might certify a student can correctly complete income tax forms.

"I think I should be learning what real life is like. I think I should be learning what I like and how I can function under different conditions."

—Student

What is my role?

As a parent/guardian, you can:

- Encourage your child to talk about goals for life after high school and help identify the skills necessary to achieve them
- Help your child identify resources, write Activity Plans, identify community certifiers, and practice skills
- Volunteer as a community certifier
- Recruit local employers, neighbors, and peers to be community certifiers

How will my child benefit from learning survival skills?

As in real life, what your child gets out of learning survival skills depends on what he or she puts into it. The more skills your child acquires, the better prepared and more confident he or she will be for life after high school. The opportunities for learning are wide open. However, beyond assistance provided by school staff, community volunteers and you, your child has the responsibility to make the learning happen.

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"One of our most important goals for teaching survival skills is to get kids out of their school and neighborhood and into the world."

-Teacher

Community certifier fact sheet

Welcome to the growing number of educators, parents/guardians, and community members committed to teaching all youth survival skills—the skills essential for leading a productive, independent, and well-balanced life. To acquire these skills, students learn in the community working with volunteers like you who are expert in an area relevant to students' futures.

What are survival skills?

Survival skills are the skills everyone needs to be independent and to achieve life goals. Knowing how to get a job is a survival skill. So is knowing how to use public transportation, buy a car, and rent an apartment. Survival skills are the things all youth must learn to make it on their own and to function as productive and satisfied adults.

Why teach survival skills?

How prepared were you for life when you left high school? All students, whether they enter the job market immediately after graduation or continue on for additional education, need to master certain skills to conduct their daily lives and achieve their goals. Specifically, learning survival skills will help students to:

- Become independent, productive, and satisfied adults
- Think about personal interests and goals
- Use resources in the community and learn from community members
- Learn about careers and lifestyle opportunities they may have never considered
- Recognize the elements of a well-balanced life
- Develop life-long learning habits
- Learn to access, navigate, and contribute to the community

Who decides the survival skills students need?

Students are encouraged to think about what they would like to be doing after they graduate from high school. Then, based on their personal plans, they identify survival skills necessary to achieve their goals. Often, parents, school staff, and community members will also identify essential survival skills for all students in their community.

"My opinion on what I need to learn to prepare me for life is complicated. I'd like to know what it's like to live alone or in a new city, what it's like to work or go to college and how to pay my own bills. I'd like to know how to separate my life from my parents, how to save money, discipline myself, give a good job interview, find someone to marry, have a happy relationship, and how to avoid conflict."

—Student

How is learning survival skills structured?

There are three essential elements of survival skills learning:

- **Students engage in self-directed learning.** Students assume a great deal of responsibility when learning survival skills. They identify which skills to learn, complete a written plan for acquiring them, meet and consult with community certifiers, and successfully demonstrate they can do the skill.
- **Learning survival skills is community based.** To acquire survival skills students do most of their learning outside of the classroom—such as at businesses, community agencies, and with neighbors. For example, the only way to get a driver's license is at the department of motor vehicles and the best place to determine whether your dog is in good health is at a veterinarian's office.
- **Students access community certifiers.** Community certifiers are people in the community who have an expert talent or ability (such as repairing cars, programming computers, and providing health care). Community certifiers are volunteers who observe a student demonstrating a survival skill related to their expertise, and decide whether the student has mastered it. For example, an accountant might certify a student can correctly complete income tax forms.

Community certifier fact sheet cont.

What is my role?

Your role is to help the student decide an appropriate way to demonstrate knowledge of the skill he or she has chosen, find resources to help the student learn the skill and, in some instances, provide instruction. Finally, you observe the student demonstrate the skill and certify that he or she has mastered it.

What do I do?

For a positive and effective interaction with students:

- **Be yourself**—An important goal of learning survival skills is to give students the opportunity to meet and interact with adults in the community. Make the student feel comfortable by sharing work and life experiences. Find common interests and be encouraging as they prepare to become independent adults. Students appreciate a sense of humor, honesty, and practical advice.
- **Review the Survival Skill Activity Plan with students**—The essential elements of learning survival skills are finding resources in the community, practicing skills, demonstrating competency, and interacting with adult community members. All of these elements are captured in the Survival Skill Activity Plan developed by you, the student, or school staff. Regardless of who writes the plan, review it with students and make suggestions based on your knowledge and expertise.
- **Provide resources**—Students are responsible for finding resources to help them learn survival skills. You can assist them by providing materials available at your worksite, such as instructional manuals, annual reports, and brochures.
- **Engage the students in active learning**—If possible, let the students do some hands-on learning related to the survival skill they are learning. For example, allow them to practice phone skills, use a computer, or fill out a job application. Some students will require more time than others to acquire

a particular skill. It is up to you to decide how much time you can spend with each student.

- **Observe the student demonstrate the survival skill**—Students will schedule an appointment with you for final certification when they feel that they are prepared to demonstrate that they've mastered the skill. Review their Survival Skill Activity Plan and watch them perform the skill. If you are convinced they have successfully acquired the skill, sign their Activity Plan. If not, discuss what students need to do to improve their ability and schedule another certification visit.

- **Be patient**—For many students, this will be their first time they are interacting with adults in the community and taking responsibility for their own learning. Being in a new setting around unfamiliar adults may make them more shy or nervous than they would ordinarily be. Recognize that for some students, learning a survival skill will represent enormous effort and may require several attempts before they successfully demonstrate mastery. Be as encouraging and supportive as possible.

- **Be an advocate for survival skills learning**—When appropriate, encourage friends and business associates to participate as community certifiers. Increasing the number of certifiers will allow more students to broaden their knowledge of the community and provide them opportunities to learn different skills.

- **Be sensitive to cultural diversity and other differences**—Not all students will interact with adults in the same way. For example, some may come from cultures that emphasize showing respect by remaining quiet or not looking an adult directly in the eyes. Some many not be native English speakers and others may be physically challenged.

"You must develop a rapport with students by convincing them that you have their own best interest at heart."

—Community certifier

survival
skills

sample survival skill activity plans

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This section contains sample Survival Skill Activity Plans. Use them as a guide for developing standard plans and for assisting students in designing individual ones. A camera-ready copy of an Activity Plan, which you can duplicate for your own use, is packaged separately.

Survival Skill Activity Plan

S

survive

Step 1: Basic information

My name Shawn Jackson

Lead school staff person Ms. Hume Phone ###-####

Community certifier George Rodriquez Phone ###-####

Community certifier's area of expertise Insurance

Address 4598 S. Interstate

Directions Corner of 45th and Interstate next to Bernie's Bagels

How I will get there: ☐ walk ☑ car ☐ bus ☐ bike ☐ other:

Step 2: Skill set

☑ Mobility
☐ Shelter
☐ Health
☐ Financial Independence
☐ Communication
☐ Community Participation
☐ Self-awareness
☐ Other (describe below):

Step 3: Skill to acquire

Describe the skill you will learn:

Know what to do in an auto accident.

On to Step 4 - - →

Step 4: What I will do to acquire this skill

List each activity you will do to acquire this skill:

1. Make an appointment to meet Mr. Rodriquez and pick up insurance report information.
2. Read the material about what to do in an accident.
3. Get an accident report form from the police station. Ask them what happens after a report is filed.
4. Complete the accident report (make believe) to prove I know how to do it.
5. Practice the steps.

Activities include steps you will take to learn the skill. For example, go to the department of motor vehicles and pick up a driver's training manual.

Step 5: Resources I will use to acquire this skill

List all the resources you will use:

People: Mr. Rodriquez—community certifier
Staff at police station
Joe (to role-play passenger in a car)
Alisa (to role-play driver of other car)

Places: insurance office
police station

Things: accident report, insurance information
car, flares, driver's license,
literature, pencil and paper

Step 6: When I will be certified

Date and time to review my activity plan with my teacher	Date and time to review my activity plan with my community certifier	Dates for learning my skill	Date and time to demonstrate my skill
Date: 10-15	Date: 10-17	From: 10-18	Date: 10-22
Time: 11:15 a.m.	Time: 11:15 a.m.	To: 10-21	Time: 3:30 p.m.

On to Step 7 - - →

Step 7: How I will prove what I've learned

Examples of how to prove you have acquired a skill:

- **Demonstrate the skill** — Perform the survival skill in the presence of the community certifier. For example, change a tire or prepare a meal while the community certifier observes.
- **Produce a product** — Create something (such as a journal, monthly budget, or weekly food plan) that illustrates your mastery of the survival skill.
- **Show a picture** — Make a video of you performing the survival skill, or take before and after photos of the process.
- **Provide a certificate** — Obtain a certificate (such as a driver's license, voter registration card, or passport) that verifies you have acquired the survival skill.
- **Eyewitness accounts** — Present signed accounts testifying that someone observed you performing the survival skill.
- **Teach others** — Show others how to perform the survival skill.
- **Oral review** — Present information about the survival skill and answer questions from the community certifier.

Have your community certifier review these and check the box to indicate approval.

List how you will demonstrate or prove that you have acquired the survival skill.

✓ Park my car in school lot and role-play for Mr. Rodriquez the correct steps to take following a car accident.

✓ Give Mr. Rodriquez my completed state accident report.

☐

Step 8: Checklist of certification criteria

Certification criteria might include a list of steps or specific activities (for example, 10 steps for what to do in case of a fire); questions testing specific knowledge; expectations for a level of performance; or specifications for a project. With the help of your community certifier, list the criteria that will be used to determine successful mastery of the survival skill.

1. Stop the car.
2. Check self, passengers for injuries.
3. Pull car to side of road.
4. Set out flares.
5. Examine damage (photograph cars if possible).
6. Exchange phone numbers, license numbers, and proof of insurance with other driver.
7. Get names, phone numbers of witnesses.
8. Call my and other driver's insurance company to make claim.
9. Pick up and fill out accident report.
10. Know procedures for calling an ambulance.

On to Step 9 →

Step 9: Getting certified

Student:

1. Practice what you will do in Steps 7 and 8 to demonstrate you can do this skill.
2. Meet with your community certifier and demonstrate the skill.
3. If your certifier says you have successfully demonstrated the skill, ask him or her to sign the certification form at the bottom of the page.
4. If your certifier feels you need more practice, ask him or her to write in the space at the right what additional actions you need to take.
5. If necessary do the actions required and schedule another certification appointment with your certifier to show that you have mastered the skill.

Community Certifier:

I have observed the student demonstrate the skill as described in Step 7. In my opinion:

- [x] the student has successfully demonstrated the skill;
- [ ] the student needs to do the following prior to becoming certified in this skill:

Date and time for final certification: _____ _____
Date Time

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Shawn Jackson
Name of Student

HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE SURVIVAL SKILL

What to do in case of a car accident

Describe the Skill

George Rodriquez	Insurance Agent	11-22-XX
Community Certifier Signature	Area of Expertise	Date

Survival Skill Activity Plan

S
survive

Step 1: Basic information

My name Sam Dugan

Lead school staff person Ms. Edwards **Phone** ###-####

Community certifier Marla Edmonds **Phone** ###-####

Community certifier's area of expertise Apartment management

Address 1135 S.E. Fountainview (Madrid Apts.)

Directions Take #14 Hawthorne bus. Get off on 32nd street. Apartment bldg. is one block east of the bus stop. Apt. 301.

How I will get there: ☐ walk ☐ car ✓ bus ☐ bike ☐ other:

Step 2: Skill Set

- ☐ Mobility
- ✓ Shelter
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Financial Independence
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Community Participation
- ☐ Self-awareness
- ☐ Other (describe below):

Step 3: Skill to acquire

Describe the skill you will learn:

Understand and use the housing section (classified ads) of the newspaper.

Complete a lease agreement for a suitable apartment.

On to Step 4 - - ►

Step 4: What I will do to acquire this skill

List each activity you will do to acquire this skill:

- Look in the newspaper classified ads and find 3 units to look at and compare.
- Design a "comparison worksheet" listing specifications of each apartment so I can make a fair comparison.
- Arrange to see each unit and complete the comparison worksheet for each.

Activities include steps you will take to learn the skill. For example, go to the department of motor vehicles and pick up a driver's training manual.

Step 5: Resources I will use to acquire this skill

List all the resources you will use:

People: Marla Edmonds—Community certifier
Jose, who lives in an apartment

Places: 3 different apartments

Things: Newspaper
Lease agreement
Paper to take notes

Step 6: When I will be certified

Date and time to review my activity plan with my teacher	Date and time to review my activity plan with my community certifier	Dates for learning my skill	Date and time to demonstrate my skill
Date: 2-12	Date: 2-15	From: 2-16	Date: 3-3
Time: 9:15 a.m.	Time: 4:00 p.m.	To: 3-1	Time: 4:00 p.m.

On to Step 7 →

Step 7: How I will prove what I've learned

Examples of how to prove you have acquired a skill:

- **Demonstrate the skill** – Perform the survival skill in the presence of the community certifier. For example, change a tire or prepare a meal while the community certifier observes.
- **Produce a product** – Create something (such as a journal, monthly budget, or weekly food plan) that illustrates your mastery of the survival skill.
- **Show a picture** – Make a video of you performing the survival skill, or take before and after photos of the process.
- **Provide a certificate** – Obtain a certificate (such as a driver's license, voter registration card, or passport) that verifies you have acquired the survival skill.
- **Eyewitness accounts** – Present signed accounts testifying that someone observed you performing the survival skill.
- **Teach others** – Show others how to perform the survival skill.
- **Oral review** – Present information about the survival skill and answer questions from the community certifier.

Have your community certifier review these and check the box to indicate approval.

List how you will demonstrate or prove that you have acquired the survival skill.

✓ Submit my comparison chart.

✓ Complete a lease agreement.

☐

Step 8: Checklist of certification criteria

Certification criteria might include a list of steps or specific activities (for example, 10 steps for what to do in case of a fire); questions testing specific knowledge; expectations for a level of performance; or specifications for a project. With the help of your community certifier, list the criteria that will be used to determine successful mastery of the survival skill.

- Lease agreement filled out, complete and accurate.
- Comparison worksheet completed. Will cover utilities; pets/children allowed; building safety and security; access to bus line; neighborhood environment; stairs/elevator; parking; rent; deposits required.

On to Step 9 →

Step 9: Getting certified

Student:

1. Practice what you will do in Steps 7 and 8 to demonstrate you can do this skill.
2. Meet with your community certifier and demonstrate the skill.
3. If your certifier says you have successfully demonstrated the skill, ask him or her to sign the certification form at the bottom of the page.
4. If your certifier feels you need more practice, ask him or her to write in the space at the right what additional actions you need to take.
5. If necessary do the actions required and schedule another certification appointment with your certifier to show that you have mastered the skill.

Community Certifier:

I have observed the student demonstrate the skill as described in Step 7. In my opinion:

- [x] the student has successfully demonstrated the skill;
- [ ] the student needs to do the following prior to becoming certified in this skill:

Date and time for final certification: _____ _____
Date Time

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Sam Dugan
Name of Student

HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE SURVIVAL SKILL

Use classified ads

Complete a lease agreement
Describe the Skill

Marla Edmonds	Apartment Management	3/3/XX
Community Certifier Signature	Area of Expertise	Date

Survival Skill Activity Plan

S

survive

Step 1 - Basic Information

My name Jasmin Ivankovich

Lead school staff person Mr. Molette Phone ###-####

Community certifier *Choose the most appropriate community certifier for your community, such as Urban League, Affirmative Action, clergy, ethnic studies professor, etc.* Phone ###-####

Community certifier's area of expertise Community Affairs

Address 101 Commerce Blvd., Schwartz Building

Directions Across from Burger King on corner in red brick office bldg.

1st floor. Office #107.

How I will get there: ☐ walk ✓ car ☐ bus ☐ bike ☐ other:

Step 2: Skill Set

- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Shelter
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Financial Independence
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Community Participation
- ☐ Self-awareness
- ☐ Other (describe below):

Step 3: Skill to acquire

Describe the skill you will learn:

- Develop an appropriate response to racism.
- Volunteer in my community.

On to Step 4 - - →

Step 4: what I will do to acquire this skill

List each activity you will do to acquire this skill:

- Interview 3 students and 3 adults to find out how they define racism.
- Write my own definition of racism.
- Spend 1 week observing and recording situations where racism occurs—in the malls, at school, in conversation with friends, on TV, in the movies, on the bus.
- Discuss my observations with my community certifier and strategize a good response to these situations.
- Use one or more strategies in a real-life situation to respond to racism.
- Schedule a time to volunteer with Young Friends after-school program and make a presentation about racism.

Step 5: Resources I will use to acquire this skill

List all the resources you will use:

People: To interview: friends, Mom, Mr. French, Joel's dad, Mrs. Sullivan (director of Young Friends), Sean Young (Community Certifier)

Places: Hanging out with friends; movie theater; Young Friends after-school program.

Things: Television; notebook for interviews

Activities include steps you will take to learn the skill. For example, go to the department of motor vehicles and pick up a driver's training manual.

Step 6: when I will be certified

Date and time to review my activity plan with my teacher	Date and time to review my activity plan with my community certifier	Dates for learning my skill	Date and time to demonstrate my skill
Date: 2-15	Date: 2-17	From: 2-17	Date: 3-3
Time: 2:10 p.m..	Time: 4:30 p.m.	To: 3-10	Time: 5:00 p.m.

On to Step 7 --->

Step 7: How I will prove what I've learned

Examples of how to prove you have acquired a skill:

- **Demonstrate the skill** — Perform the survival skill in the presence of the community certifier. For example, change a tire or prepare a meal while the community certifier observes.
- **Produce a product** — Create something (such as a journal, monthly budget, or weekly food plan) that illustrates your mastery of the survival skill.
- **Show a picture** — Make a video of you performing the survival skill, or take before and after photos of the process.
- **Provide a certificate** — Obtain a certificate (such as a driver's license, voter registration card, or passport) that verifies you have acquired the survival skill.
- **Eyewitness accounts** — Present signed accounts testifying that someone observed you performing the survival skill.
- **Teach others** — Show others how to perform the survival skill.
- **Oral review** — Present information about the survival skill and answer questions from the community certifier.

Have your community certifier review these and check the box to indicate approval.

List how you will demonstrate or prove that you have acquired the survival skill.

✓ Present notes from interviews with adults and students.

✓ Present a written definition of racism and 3 observations of racism.

✓ Volunteer 6 hours with Young Friends after-school program and discuss racism and role-play appropriate responses with kids (director will write an eyewitness account).

Step 8: Checklist of certification criteria

Certification criteria might include a list of steps or specific activities (for example, 10 steps for what to do in case of a fire); questions testing specific knowledge; expectations for a level of performance; or specifications for a project. With the help of your community certifier, list the criteria that will be used to determine successful mastery of the survival skill.

- Notes from interviews include definitions of racism.
- My own definition of racism.
- Written record of 3 of my personal observations of racism.
- Role-play an appropriate response to 2 examples of racism.
- Complete 6 hours of volunteer work
- Presentation to Young Friends. Presentation will be age appropriate; be clear and understandable; include everyone in role-playing appropriate responses to racism.

On to Step 9 - - →

Step 9: Getting certified

Student:

1. Practice what you will do in Steps 7 and 8 to demonstrate you can do this skill.
2. Meet with your community certifier and demonstrate the skill.
3. If your certifier says you have successfully demonstrated the skill, ask him or her to sign the certification form at the bottom of the page.
4. If your certifier feels you need more practice, ask him or her to write in the space at the right what additional actions you need to take.
5. If necessary do the actions required and schedule another certification appointment with your certifier to show that you have mastered the skill.

Community Certifier:

I have observed the student demonstrate the skill as described in Step 7. In my opinion:

☐ the student has successfully demonstrated the skill;

☑ the student needs to do the following prior to becoming certified in this skill:

Provide written notes from interviews.

Date and time for final certification: 3/5 (Date) 5:00 p.m. (Time)

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Jasmin Ivankovich

Name of Student

HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE SURVIVAL SKILL

Developed appropriate response to racism.

Volunteer to Young Friends after-school program.

Describe the Skill

Sean Young	Community Member	3/5/XX
Community Certifier Signature	Area of Expertise	Date

Connections: Linking Work and Learning

This is a series of products designed to facilitate work-based learning so that youth make informed career choices and experience success in the world of work. Other products in the series include:

Employer Recruitment and Orientation Guide – Helps school staff develop and implement strategies to recruit and orient employers for providing work-based learning experiences for students. The guide includes 15 fact sheets, answering the questions most commonly asked by employers, that can be used for a variety of recruitment and orientation purposes.

Job Shadow Guide – Helps a student investigate a specific job during several hours at a worksite. A companion piece for staff outlines how to plan and implement effective job shadow experiences.

Career Exploration Guide – Helps a student explore all aspects of a job/career over the course of several days at a worksite. A companion piece for staff outlines how to plan career explorations that are of maximum benefit to students.

Learning Site Analysis Form – Used collaboratively by school and worksite staff, this tool helps identify and analyze the learning potential of a worksite.

Integrated Workplace Learning Project – Highlights how to design individual or group projects that integrate academic with work-based learning.

Learning in the Community: From A to Z – Gives a tour of key concepts and strategies intrinsic to making the community an extension of the classroom.

To order materials in this series, contact NWREL Document Reproduction Service at (800) 547-6339, ext. 519

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